

## DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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June 19, 1996

LTMS/EIS/EIR Coordinator  
c/o U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 9 (W-3-3)  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94947

Subject: Long-Term Management Strategy (LTMS) for the Placement of  
Dredged Material in the San Francisco Bay Region, Draft  
Policy Environmental Impact Statement/Programmatic  
Environmental Impact Report, April, 1996

Dear LTMS Coordinator:

I am writing regarding the above-named report, received in the Commission's office in April, 1996. These comments have not been reviewed by the Commission, so they are staff comments only.

The Delta Protection Commission is a State regional planning agency with land use authority and limited regulatory authority in the 500,000 acre Delta Primary Zone, a subset of the Legal Delta. The Commission has had an interest in the LTMS process since the Commission started its work in 1993. The Commission has received briefings on the status of the program and received documents as they have been prepared and released. The Commission's interest is based on the need in the Delta for material for long-term levee maintenance, for increasing the levee cross-sections for long-term stability and reliability, and for possible riparian habitat restoration.

To this end I sent a letter to Mr. Robert Tufts, dated September 9, 1994, with specific comments regarding reuse of dredged material in the Delta for levee maintenance and improvement. Three of the four topics were not addressed in the DEIR: the need for additional information about dredging in the Delta, the need for additional information about the characteristics of material dredged in the Delta, and the need for more specific information about the volume of material needed for levee maintenance and improvement. The DEIR does include additional information about the experimental levee maintenance projects that have been carried out in the Delta.

The DEIR differentiates between the Delta as an area which needs dredging and supplies certain volumes of dredged material from time to time to maintain shipping channels, recreational marinas, water lines, and other uses, and the Delta as an area for upland disposal/reuse of dredged spoils from the Bay Area. While the DEIR states the "planning area" studied in the document is west of Sherman Island, thus excluding the Delta, the DEIR does include a great deal of information about the Delta in Chapter Four which describes "Affected Environment" because it is a possible upland disposal site.

The most important information in the DEIR, in terms of Delta levees, is the limited volume of material deemed suitable for reuse in the Delta. The DEIR states on page 4-121 "it is assumed that maximum Delta levee reuse would be limited to 1 mcy during the 1 to 5-year period, 5 mcy during the 5- to 15-year period, and 20 mcy during the 15- to 50-year period due to water quality concerns such as the presence of metals and salinity, and constraints caused by levee-side barge access."

The delineation of these volume figures seems to have been prepared without a full analysis or study. However, if there is concurrence by the other agencies of concern, such as the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, this is a much smaller volume that was predicted in the past. On page 4-128, the DEIR states "Based on COE designs and DWR calculations, an estimated 55 mcy of material would be required to rehabilitate substandard Delta levees."

Currently the Delta levees are maintained to an "interim" standard agreed to by the State and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, called the Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) standard. The Commission's adopted Plan urges strengthening and raising the levees to a safer, more stable standard, such as the Corps' PL-99 agricultural standard, or other agreed upon standard. Substantial volumes of material would be needed to reconfigure levees to meet this standard and to maintain the levees annually. The Commission's Plan recommends study of the appropriateness of materials from other sources, such as the Bay area, for these needs.

In addition, it should be noted that the value of the Delta islands is not merely their value for agriculture but their value as part of the State and federal water projects directing water toward the project pumps, for flood control, and the value of the wildlife habitats on the islands behind the levees and on the levees themselves.

In summary, the LTMS program and studies should be expanded to more fully evaluate the "match" between dredged materials from the Bay Area and the need for material for levee maintenance and enhancement in the Delta. The conclusions in the DEIR are made from fragmented data

and assumptions which limit possibilities for reuse of these materials in the Delta. More specific studies with participation by the Central Valley Regional Water Control Board may result in guidelines which would allow additional materials to be reused, as well as protection of Delta resource values.

The Commission supports the research and work carried out to date and supports additional research toward the goal of reuse of dredged material for Delta levee maintenance and strengthening.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Margit Aramburu", followed by a long horizontal flourish line.

Margit Aramburu  
Executive Director

cc: Delta Protection Commission